

**It is necessary to secure the support of the international community in the creation of RECOM.**

*Since we are not going to get the support of politicians, we should seek the support of the international community.*

**Statement:** Ilda Habota, Sandžak Committee for the Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms, Serbia, National consultation with human rights organizations, Fruška Gora, Serbia, October, 10th 2008.

*I would like to believe more that we are going to get the support of political elites and the media.*

**Statement:** Marko Veličković, Civil Resource Development Centre, Serbia, National consultation with human rights organizations, Fruška Gora, Serbia, October, 10th 2008.

*Why would Serbs from Kosovo or their political representatives be against such a commission? I think, they can have a problem with it because the commission will also deal with the suffering caused by Serbia, but (...) I would not say at the very beginning of the process that all politicians are going to be against it. Let's not forget, Slobodan Milošević is no longer in power, or some other people in other countries. We should give them some more credit.*

**Statement:** Bodgan Ivanišević, International Centre for Transitional Justice, National consultation with human rights organizations, Fruška Gora, Serbia, October, 10th 2008.

**It is necessary to organize trainings of non-governmental organizations for promoting the initiative at local levels.**

*I would suggest, if it is possible, that for us, who admit that we lack this knowledge, that we should have an opportunity to additionally enrich our knowledge through trainings or education and bring this story down to the local level. This would mean initiating this story in our local communities.*

**Statement:** Dženeta Agović, Impuls, Serbia, National consultation with human rights organizations, Fruška Gora, Serbia, October 10th 2008

**It is necessary to organize meetings of associations of victims at local levels.**

*I think it would be good to organize meetings of associations of, let's say, mothers from Srebrenica, some women from Serbia, who went through some similar tragedies; to connect them and give them space in media (...) That would be very efficient in the sense of sensitization of the society such a story.*

**Statement:** Jelena Cakić, Women for Peace, Serbia, National consultation with human rights organizations, Fruška Gora, Serbia, October 10th 2008

**Rape should be included in the mandate of RECOM.**

*Rape and victims of rape should be included in the mandate of RECOM.*

**Statement:** Dženeta Agović, Impuls, Serbia, National consultation with human rights organizations, Fruška Gora, Serbia, October, 10th 2008.

**19. National consultation with journalists on the Initiative for RECOM**

Fruška Gora, Serbia,  
October 11th 2008

The consultation was organized by Impunity Watch (Serbia) and the Independent Journalists' Association of Vojvodina (Serbia) and attended by 24 journalists representing various media outlets throughout the country. *The Report on the Causes of Impunity* by Impunity Watch was presented during the initial part of the consultation. Consultations were opened by Dinko Gruhonjić (Independent Journalists' Association of Vojvodina, Serbia), Nataša Kandić (Humanitarian Law Center, Serbia), and Marijana Toma (Impunity Watch, Serbia).

**Journalists support the idea to create RECOM**

*Our agency supports the initiative*

**Statement:** Gizella Stanyo Tot, Magjar Szo, Serbia, National consultation with journalists, Fruška Gora, Serbia, October 11th 2008.

*Isn't it enough, so to speak, that many villages have disappeared from the map to feel the need to establish such a commission or any other coalition which can help find the truth about these people, and that is something that has to be known.*

**Statement:** Ivana Jovanović, BETA news agency, Serbia, National consultation with journalists, Fruška Gora, Serbia, October 11th 2008.

**It is necessary to establish a minimum of indisputable facts acceptable at the regional level.**

*Facing the fact that each society has its own truth, we began considering ways how to make it possible for everybody at the regional level to accept the same set of established indisputable facts and create an official, reliable, and unbiased record which will help write history text books in a different way, far from the political agenda, based solely on facts.*

**Statement:** Nataša Kandić, Humanitarian Law Center, Serbia, National consultation with journalists, Fruška Gora, Serbia, October 11th 2008.

*I support the creation of the fact-finding commission because that is the only institutional form that can offer relevant information. Without such a centralized source of information, reporting becomes very risky and I think that this fact-finding commission can be the source of reliable information based on which journalists can do their research.*

**Statement:** Jelena Petković, Rusko slovo, Serbia, National consultation with journalists, Fruška Gora, Serbia, October 11th 2008.

### **RECOM should also deal with the causes of the war.**

*I am afraid that without cause there can be no consequences and without facts there can be no reliable truth about either the cause or the consequences and the entire effort will be wasted*

**Statement:** Boro Lazukić, TV Panonija, Serbia, National consultation with journalists, Fruška Gora, Serbia, October 11th 2008.

### **Many believe that RECOM will only gain media attention if drastic measures are taken to capture media attention.**

*Representatives of the media must carefully consider how to help it make the news. How to make RECOM become an event, how to make sure it becomes news of the day?*

**Statement:** Dinko Gruhonjić, Independent Journalists' Association of Vojvodina, Serbia, National consultation with journalists, Fruška Gora, Serbia, October 11th 2008.

### **Public broadcasters are obliged to report on the initiative for RECOM, but local media coverage is important as well.**

*Public broadcasters must report about the initiative because we pay monthly fees and they are responsible for such interpretation. Private media is under no obligation whatsoever to tackle the issue of war crimes.*

**Statement:** Aleksandar Trifunović, Buka Media Project, BiH, National consultation with journalists, Fruška Gora, Serbia, October 11th 2008.

*I would not leave out the local media in this context (...) So far we have only discussed the role of the most influential media.*

**Statement:** Larisa Inić, Radio Subotica, Serbia, National consultation with journalists, Fruška Gora, Serbia, October 11th 2008.

*'When I at first reacted to the idea that public broadcasters should be the ones to cover the event, I was not against the idea, but simply aware of the statement we had made at the beginning that the whole job must be initiated without any support and the logistics of the state, and I apologize, but public broadcasters are well rooted in government structures, or should I say political and party structures, for lack of a better word. That is, so, the cause for my concern when we talk about public broadcaster reporting.*

**Statement:** Boro Lazukić, TV Panonija, Serbia, National consultation with journalists, Fruška Gora, Serbia, October 11th 2008.

### **National war crimes trials should be public.**

*I don't see why we don't have public war crimes trials and trials for organized crimes. War Crimes Prosecutor Vukčević has said so many times that he was not against it, and that he was even in favour of public trials. Siniša Važić, President of the Belgrade District Court has also said in his speeches at various seminars that there were no obstacles to these trials being conducted publicly. Why don't we figure out who is against that idea and who is the obstacle? If a judge believes that his job should be secluded from the public eye, than this judge is not up to the task. Let's replace that judge with somebody who will stand behind his or her own work and enable the media to do their part of the job professionally (...) Let's give the public in Serbian an opportunity to see who these people are, why is it that we cannot hear them speak at main hearings, and why some media make them look like heroes (...)*

**Statement:** Gordana Petrović, Radio television of Serbia RTS, Serbia, National consultation with journalists, Fruška Gora, Serbia, October 11th 2008.

### **Denial is the method employed by the media to cover crimes committed by Serbian forces**

*But when you start investigating the way media perceive these war crimes, you will see that the essence is that they only talk about crimes committed against us, and very little or not at all about the crimes we have committed, so there is no Brechtian dilemma in their minds that everybody should admit their shameful past. On the contrary, war crimes denial is still the prevailing technique, so to speak, of war crimes media coverage.*

**Statement:** Aleksandar Trifunović, Buka Media Project, BiH, National consultation with journalists, Fruška Gora, Serbia, October 11th 2008.

### **Create a war crimes map which will serve as a reminder for journalists.**

*Prepare some sort of a planner or a calendar, let's say, for the year 2000, where the most significant holidays would be replaced by war crimes which took place on those dates, and give it to journalists as a reminder.*

**Statement:** Larisa Inić, Radio Subotica, Serbia, National consultation with journalists, Fruška Gora, Serbia, October 11th 2008.

**RECOM commissioners should be reputable individuals. Some of them should be representatives of the government.**

*That commission (...) will only be interesting for the media if it is made of people recognized in public for their personality, integrity, profession, their career and the positions they hold, regardless of whether they are artists, representatives of the non-governmental or governmental sector, or politicians, but I do believe that both should be members of the commission, but it is a must that government representatives are included.*

**Statement:** Ivana Jovanović, BETA news agency, Serbia, National consultation with journalists, Fruška Gora, Serbia, October 11th 2008.

**Positive experiences should be included in public hearings and made readily accessible for the media.**

*Srdan Aleksić would never make headlines if it had not been for the Civic Vojvodina/ Gradanska Vojvodina who started an initiative to name a street after him. When the then government banned the initiative, the whole story was revealed. So, what we need is an initiative, something really happening (...). You mentioned positive experiences. Journalists did not write about it, but give them an opportunity, at least to some of them, to contact some people.*

**Statement:** Smiljana Milinkov, Radio 021, Serbia, National consultations with journalists, Fruška Gora, Serbia, October 11, 2008.

## **20. National consultation with associations of the families of the missing and homeland defenders on the Initiative for RECOM**

Vukovar, Croatia,  
October 24th 2008

The consultation was organized by Documenta (Croatia), the Alliance of Associations of the fami-

lies of detained and missing Croatian homeland defenders (Croatia), and the Mothers of Vukovar Association (Croatia). There were 30 participants, mostly representatives of victims' associations, veterans, and human rights organizations activists. The initiative to create RECOM was presented by Vesna Teršelič (Documenta, Croatia), Nataša Kandić (Humanitarian Law Center, Serbia), Katarina Kruhonja (Center for Peace, Non-violence, and Human Rights, Croatia), and Mirko Kovačić (Mothers of Vukovar Association, Croatia). Croatian Radio Vukovar, B92 and Vukovarske novine reported on the gathering.

**Some participants expressed fear that RECOM will be formed by non-governmental organizations and that documentation collected by various associations over the years might be lost if taken outside of Croatia.**

It was clarified during the discussion that the non-governmental organizations are advocating the establishment of the Coalition for creating RECOM and that the commission can only be formed by governments.

**Participants of the consultations suggested a more intensive inclusion of veterans and veterans' association in the consultation process.**

Veterans are interested in being included in the debate because that could help them dispel the stereotype that all veterans are war criminals. Participants stressed the importance of including all victims as equal and active participants of the consultation process.

**The initiative to create the regional commission for establishing the facts about war crimes needs the strong support of associations of victims and homeland defenders.**

*These three pillars [HLC, Documenta, and RDC] are not sufficient. We need much stronger support for such an initiative and Mr. Ivan Pšenica [Alliance of associations of the families of detained and missing Croatian homeland defenders] and Mr. Mirko Kovačić (Mothers of Vukovar Association) have already told us about the importance of including victims, representatives of victims' associations, and hopefully homeland defenders' associations, and other civil society organizations as supporters of this initiative.*